An Argument for Paternity Leave and Progressive Maternity Policies: Lessons from Country Governments and Private Sector in the Caribbean

This case study pulls from the global evidence base to illustrate the benefits of paternity leave on children and families, detailing current leave policies in the five ASSIST-supported English-speaking Caribbean countries related to pregnancy, immediate after-birth care, and well-child care. The document highlights progressive initiatives that have been implemented, presents results from the public and private sector, and provides lessons learned for Caribbean stakeholders interested in strengthening family health and well-being. Research indicates that all five countries - Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines - have maternity leave policies at the national level, but none currently have paternity leave policies. However, Jamaica has initiated conversations at the national level and some private sector companies in the Caribbean, influenced by trailblazers in the global arena, are starting to make shifts in their parental leave policies to contribute to a better work-life balance that supports family well-being and, at the same time, contributes to both increased gender equality and improved productivity. In addition to the global literature, this case study is also influenced by two ASSIST-supported desk reviews (Eastern and Southern Caribbean and Jamaica), two gender analyses (Antigua and Dominica), and learning across the English-speaking Caribbean which have indicated that examining parental leave is a trending topic relevant to global health.
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